

# The Albany HERALD

By Terry Lewis  
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***A U.S. Congressman says the Veterans Administration must meet its commitment to former troops.***

**ALBANY, GA** — As a ranking member of the House Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop Jr., D-Albany, sent a letter late last week to Veterans Affairs Secretary Erik Shinseki outlining his priorities for improving the performance of the VA.

Subcommittee Chairman John Culberson, R-Texas, joined Bishop in sending the letter to Shinseki as part of the subcommittee's preparation for hearings later this year.

"Our troops and their families have always gone above and beyond the call of duty, enduring great sacrifices to keep the American people safe," Bishop said. "We have an obligation to provide the services, support and resources our veterans and their families deserve, and we must ensure that the VA carries out its mission of providing adequate care to help ease the burden of wartime service."

In their letter to Shinseki, Bishop and Culberson wrote, "Your department's mission is to serve

America's veterans and their families with dignity and compassion, and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive the care and support they have earned through service to our country.

"We are committed to ensuring that Congress, on behalf of the American people, fully supports the Department of Veteran Affairs in carrying out this mission."

Specifically, the letter asked Shinseki to analyze all discretionary programs, including medical care, construction, information technology, general operating expenses, research and the National Cemetery Administration, to look for savings and to also identify any duplicative or inefficient programs that can be eliminated or improved to provide savings for taxpayers and better health care and services for veterans.

"With our troops in harm's away, we must continue to provide the combat support equipment that helps troops win on the battlefield, give their families some stability and peace of mind here at home, and deliver exceptional patient care and services for our veterans when they come home," Bishop said. "Doing anything less would be a disgrace to their service."

The congressman added that subcommittee hearings would begin shortly after March 1.